

## John T. Sullivan et al. to Andrew Jackson, April 8, 1833, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### JOHN T. SULLIVAN, PETER WAGER, AND HENRY D. GILPIN TO JACKSON.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sullivan, Wager, and Gilpin were government directors of the Bank of the United States. Jackson relied on them for information about the conduct of the affairs of the institution. For a report sent by them April 22, 1833, see *Senate Docs.*, no. 2, 23 Cong., 1 sess., p. 22.

Philadelphia, April 8, 1833.

*Sir*, We have received a letter from Mr. Kendall conveying to us your wishes that we should communicate to you in the most authentic form, information relative to various proceedings of the Bank of the United States, and we need hardly say how readily we shall perform all the duties of the office you have confided to us. Our efforts have hitherto been honestly directed to promote what we believe the true interests of the country in this institution, to ascertain its situation, and to alter or prevent every thing in its operations which we have deemed to be disadvantageous or incorrect. In this course, whatever success may attend us, we shall resolutely persevere.

It is less easy than is generally supposed even for Directors, especially Government Directors, to possess themselves of all the facts and there are difficulties in the way of any inquiry, other than a formally official one, not readily to be surmounted. We are at liberty it is true to inspect the private accounts of those whose paper is submitted to us, and we might do so no doubt occasionally and casually. But we could not, without a breach of trust, make the situation of those accounts known to others, except under

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such circumstances as would render the act one of representative duty or in obedience to explicit requisitions. The Secretary of the Treasury being expressly recognized in the charter as the agent between the Government and the Corporation as well as the official manager of the finances of the country, instructions from him would afford us unanswerable authority and justification for scrutinizing the accounts thus situated, insisting upon their full development, and reporting the details. Without something of this sort to back our movement we feel certain that we should be repelled with prompt distrust, our attempt would be defeated, and we should have to bear all the odium attached to a volunteer inquisition not pursued according to the mode prescribed by law, and necessary to sustain it with success.

In an investigation so directed we might also be assisted (which we should greatly desire) by the other Government Directors acting immediately under the same instructions and repairing here at such times as we might agree upon. It is possible that in time we may gradually acquire a pretty correct knowledge of the loans that have been made to printers and members of congress, and we shall not hesitate to inform the government of any improper proceedings with which they were attended. This too we believe would meet your wishes more fully than less perfect information transmitted now. That we anxiously watch the course of proceedings with a view to protect the principles and interests of the government we trust it is unnecessary to assure you; but it cannot be pronounced to what results or extent our investigations may lead till we shall be able to conduct them in the thorough and official form we have mentioned and with the advantages it will give us. Submitting these views to you with a full sense of our responsibilities and a sincere anxiety faithfully to discharge our duties to the government which we represent,

We remain with great respect